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AN

ABSTRACT

OF THE PUBLICATIONS

OF THE

Religious

Madras Tract Society,

Published by order of the Committee.

Madras.

PRINTED AT THE CHURCH MISSION PRESS.

1827.

ADVERTISEMENT.

“ The Committee have felt it desirable to have a small pamphlet prepared containing in a condensed form, the substance of the various tracts which they have published.—With this view an Analysis has been drawn up in which will be found a brief abstract of all the tracts at present on the list. It is designed to present to the friends of the Society a clear view of the nature of the tracts circulated, while it will enable those, who wish to order the Society’s publications, to judge more accurately which tracts are best adapted to particular places, and will guide in some measure the operations of distributors.”

Extract from the 8th Report of
the Madras Religious Tract Society,

JAN. 12, 1827.

ABSTRACT, &c.

No. 2.—*Tamil and Teloogoo.....6 Pages.

The Treasure.

This Tract, founded on Matt. 16, 26. "What is a man profited &c.," begins by shewing how careless men are respecting their souls, and eternity; and points out the unprofitableness of riches to a dying sinner, conscious of his guilt and looking forward to the wrath of God. The author shews the depravity of men and their danger, what is essential in order to Salvation, and what God has done in order to our being saved. He then presents the love of Christ and his mediation, and calls upon the reader to contemplate these, to seek above all things the Salvation of the soul, ceasing from the love of the world and the follies of his forefathers, and urges the great consideration contained in the text.

* The printing of No. 1. and No. 3. is discontinued.

No. 4.—Tamil and Teloogoo..... ..15 Pages.

The New Birth.

The word மறுபிறப்பு chosen as the title of this tract is designedly ambiguous. Among the heathen it signifies 'transmigration,' and among Christians 'regeneration.' The tract begins by noticing and refuting the common idea, so prevalent among the natives, that we must believe and act as our fathers did before us, which is the common reason assigned for believing transmigration. Transmigration is then shewn to be a doctrine contrary to fact, false, and of immoral tendency; and a variety of arguments are made use of to prove the same point. Having deprived the enquirer of all hope from that quarter, the supreme excellence of Christianity is asserted, and the "New birth" which the Lord Jesus Christ calls for, is shewn to be what refers not to the body, but to the soul. Regeneration is then defined and its necessity insisted on, and our entrance into Heaven shewn to hinge entirely upon it. In reply to the enquiry 'how we can have so great a change effected in us,' the expression of our Lord, "born of the Spirit," is referred to, and it is shewn to be the work of the Spirit to lead us to a sense of sin, repentance &c. to faith in Christ who died for us, prayer, joy, and enlargement in divine knowledge. In conclusion, the enquirer is exhorted to pray for the influences of the Holy Spirit, and to use all the means which God has appointed.

No. 5.—Abridged. Tamil.....50 Pages.

The ten Commandments of God.

The exposition of the Decalogue contained in this tract is prefaced by a notice of the unsatisfactory nature of the heathen writings, and of the reverence due to the word of God, and by explaining the time and circumstances under which the law was given.

Under the 1st Commandment the unity of God is asserted, and Polytheism is shewn to have arisen from men's deifying the elements, the heavenly bodies, and heroes.

In explaining the 2d Commandment the writer notices how difficult the human mind has ever found it to conceive of a Spiritual being, and explains the nature of real and spiritual worship, touching on the subserviency of bodily posture to devotional purposes.

The 3d Commandment is shewn to forbid all low thoughts of God, and all irreverence in His worship, both of which prevail amongst idolaters, and arise out of the fact that their God is one of their own making. Swearing falsely by God's name and jesting with it, together with magic, incantations and the like, are proved to be a violation of this Commandment.

Under the 4th Commandment the design and use of the Sabbath are pointed out, together with the circumstances of its institution, the necessity of such a day of rest, and the manner in which it should be spent.

In expounding the 8th Commandment theft is shewn to extend to every species of dishonesty, and under the 9th, the writer meets the common argument—that it is lawful to swear falsely in order to save a man's life, or making a mental reservation as to what we assert.

Having expounded the law, the writer shews that it is revealed in order to convince of sin and lead us to embrace the Gospel, that the Gospel only can enable us to obey the law or render our obedience acceptable to God. These important truths are fully and forcibly applied at the close of the tract.

No. 6.—Tamil.....19 Pages.

The way of Righteousness.

The design of this tract is to consider and refute the idea that every man may be saved by the religion he professes (whether it be true or false), if he is but moral and benevolent. This is done by shewing that Christianity is supremely excellent, and indispensable to the Salvation of man. The history of Cornelius is very fully commented upon as an illustration of this.

No. 7.—Tamil.....12 Pages.

The incarnation of Christ.

This tract refers in the commencement to the subject noticed in its title, stating that but one divine Incarnation

has ever taken place, but afterwards takes in a very full and useful view of the general features of Christianity.

The writer calls the reader's attention to the various false kinds of atonement common among the heathen.

1st Pilgrimage to holy places, and works of public and private charity, these are shewn to be insufficient and unavailing, because we only give to God what is previously his own.

2. Meditation on God. The vanity of this as an atonement is shewn by supposing a criminal to expect to evade punishment by thinking on his sovereign; and by a reference to the justice of God.

3. Religious Austerities, pronouncing the name of God, use of sacred ashes, &c. these being mere "bodily exercise" cannot atone for the guilt of the soul. Ignorance of the nature and evil of sin the cause of all these errors. Sin an infinite evil. God can either be merciful and forgive sin or just and punish it, but that it might be punished and pardoned, Christ became incarnate and by his infinite merits atoned for infinite sin. Thus infinite mercy is vouchsafed.

Then follows the method of Salvation, including the fall of man, the first promise, the typical sacrifices, the expectation of a Messiah, the prophecies, the date and manner of our Lord's birth, His character, sufferings, death, and ascension, the preaching of the gospel to all nations and the supreme excellence of Christianity. "Call not" says the writer "this the Iron age, it is a day of mercy, if you reject Christ you will perish, if you believe and obey him

you will be safe here and blessed for ever." The tract is, by its comprehensiveness, well suited to be given when there is an opportunity of giving but one.

No. 8.—Tamil.....12 Pages.

The way to Heavenly Bliss.

The great doctrine of justification by grace through faith is the subject of this tract throughout.—It is illustrated by the history of two servants of whom one had and the other had not, served and obeyed his master ; and by the different grounds on which the two would rest their claim if they applied for wages.—The one appealing to his services as fully meriting recompence, while the other could have no plea but such as the benevolence of his master would furnish. In the conclusion, a number of texts are quoted to illustrate and prove the Christian doctrine of justification.

No. 9.—Tamil.....12 Pages.

The last Judgment.

The tract is founded on part of the 25th. Chapter of Matthew.—The subject as expressed by the title is the general judgment, and the writer explains what is the meaning and force of the words of our Lord, " come ye blessed of my father—for I was an hungred and ye gave meat &c. &c." They are with great clearness shewn to afford no real support to the erroneous doctrine of salvation by human merit.

No. 10.—Tamil..... 64 Pages.

On the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This tract contains a full and lengthened argument on the subject mentioned in its title. It is taken very much from the work on the same topic by Gilbert West Esq. and it follows the same general train of reasoning. The design of the writer is to shew that the resurrection of Christ affords a demonstration of the truth of the gospel. The tract however, is a larger one than any native is likely to peruse who is not previously convinced of the truth of Christianity, and it is therefore valuable rather as being calculated to establish, than as likely to produce, faith in Christ. It, of course, is not suited for indiscriminate distribution.

No. 11.—Tamil..... 18 Pages.

On the Birth of Christ.

This tract is a full and very circumstantial account of our Lord's birth, and embraces all the particulars stated by the four Evangelists. The writer calls on all seriously to consider the character and work of Him who was thus born, and to believe and obey that Gospel which Christ came to reveal and establish. At the close several texts of scripture are quoted as proving and enforcing the whole.

No. 12.—Tamil.....28 Pages.

The Ancient Prophecies.

The Prophecies which refer to Christ are the subject of this tract and the author appends to each a full explanation. The passages quoted are Genesis 3: 15. 12: 2, 3. 49: 10. Deut. 18: 15. &c. &c. The traditions respecting a Saviour which are to be found among all nations are shewn to have had their origin in these early prophecies, though the truth afterwards became corrupted and mixed up with much that was fabulous. The scope of the tract is to shew the agreement of fact with prediction, and to prove that they mutually support each other.

No. 13.—Portuguese.....16 Pages.

The faithful Saying.

This tract is a Portuguese translation of one of the Rev. Mr. Cooper's sermons, and is founded on 1 Tim. 1. 15. Under the first head the writer considers particularly what this report or 'saying' is and explains the character, coming, and work of Christ, with the nature of the salvation enjoyed through him. Under the second head the truth and suitableness of this message, and the reception to be given to it, are pointed out.

No. 14.—Portuguese.....18 Pages.

The Direction and Promise of the Gospel.

This is another sermon from the same author founded on Acts 16: 31.—The sermon is divided into two parts the first of which contains a statement of what is comprehended in the direction given.—This is shewn to be the only direction that has been given ever since man fell—the only one that could be suited to a creature under his circumstances. Under the second division the promise in the text is shewn to include deliverance from wrath, from condemnation, and from bondage.

No. 15.—Tamil.....6 Pages.

A Dialogue on Salvation.

The design of this tract is to shew that the twofold misery of fallen man—his guilt and his impurity, required a twofold remedy, and that *that* remedy is to be found in the atonement of Christ, and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit.

No. 16.—Tamil8 Pages.

Justice and Mercy displayed.

In this tract the consistency of the atonement of Christ, and of the gospel in general, with the justice as well as mercy of God is shewn, and the history of Zaleucus and his son is brought forward as affording an illustration.

No. 17.—Tamil 6. Pages.

The Culprit's false plea.

This is the supposed history of a murderer who when brought to trial states in his defence, as extenuating his crime altogether, that since he committed it he has performed extensive acts of charity both private and public. The general scope and design of the tract is to shew that good deeds will not atone for bad ones.

No. 18.—Portuguese 12 Pages.

The Foolish Bargain.

This tract is taken from the same publication as Nos. 13 & 14. The discourse is founded upon Matt. xvi, 26. and the general proposition discussed is, "that the man who for the sake of worldly happiness however great shall lose his soul will make a most foolish bargain and in the end will bitterly repent what he has done." To illustrate this, the writer notices the thing bought and the price given for it, and shews the vanity and emptiness of worldly good and the incalculable value of the soul of man.

No. 19.—Tamil 12 Pages.

The Doctrine of the Soul.

In this tract the nature, superiority and value of the soul are shewn, and men are called upon to care for it, as they do for their bodies, and to seek its everlasting salvation through Christ Jesus.

No. 20.—Tamil44 Pages.

The Indian Pilgrim.

This tract contains the first and fourth chapters of the Indian Pilgrim as translated into Tamil and published by the Church Missionary Society.—In the first chapter the miserable insufficiency of Polytheism to satisfy the mind of an awakened and enquiring sinner is fully shewn, and the fourth chapter brings forward the gospel as that which alone can satisfy and save.

No. 21.—Tamil36 Pages.

An extract from the same work addressed to the followers of Mahomet. Notice is taken, among other things, of the absurd homage which is paid to the two grandsons of the prophet—Hussein and Hossein. The conclusion is the same as that of No. 20.

No. 22.—Tamil.....216 Pages.

This work by the late Rev. Mr. Swartz is a series of dialogues between a Christian and an Idolater on the following Subjects.

Part 1. Dial. 1.—The Divine attributes and the Creation.

Part 2. { 2.—The Primeval state of Man.

{ 3.—The fall of man, and the first promise.

Part 3. 4.—An exposition of the ten commandments.

- Part 4. 5.—A general view of the gospel and an account of the birth of Christ.
- Part 5. 6.—An epitome of the life of Christ.
- Part 6. { 7.—The sufferings and death of Christ.
- 8.—The first preaching of the Gospel, the success which attended it, and the persecution of its professors.
- 9.—The way of becoming personally interested in the gospel.
-10.—A statement of the spiritual bearing and scope of the decalogue, a notice of the impropriety of Caste and of the design of affliction.
-11.—The need of divine aid to enable us to walk with God, and The nature of prayer.
-13.—The work of the Holy Spirit. The use of the law and of the Gospel—The design of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.—The Christian Ministry.
-14.—The privileges of real christians.—The general resurrection and last judgment.—The final state of the righteous.
-15.—The internal evidence of divine revelation as found in the nature of the truths revealed.
-16. } The proof which Christianity derives
-17. } from Prophecy
-18.—The proof afforded by miracles.
- Conclusion.—The Prayer of a convinced sinner.

No. 23.—Teloogoo..... 16 Pages.

Spiritual Instruction.

This is an illustration of the Scripture method of Salvation, and is the supposed history of a King whose son died to save a number of rebels, and through whom pardon and safety were proclaimed to them.

No. 24.—Portuguese..... 12 Pages.

A Translation of the tract "James Byrne."

It contains the history of a man who in consequence of reading a portion of scripture, became acquainted with the great truths of the Gospel and renounced Popery.—The Tract is calculated to shew the great importance of reading the Scriptures, and is intended for circulation among Roman Catholics.

No. 25.—Tamil 47 Pages.

Scripture Extracts.

The work, as printed entire, is a translation of the English Tract bearing the same title.—Divided into parts the contents are as follows,

Part 1.—On the Scriptures,—the character of God,—Providence,—the Law,—and the truth of Christianity.

2.—On the fall of man,—the excellencies of Christ,—the

works of Christ,—the reconciliation of God to man,—and the intercession of Christ.

3.—On regeneration,—confession of sin, and forgiveness,—justification by faith,—sanctification.

4.—The privileges of true christians,—The duties of a holy life,—the worship of God, and the Lord's Day.

5.—On death,—the resurrection,—the last judgment,—heaven and hell.

No. 26.—Teloogoo 58 Pages.

The History of Joseph.

This publication is designed principally for the use of schools, and is a scripture extract containing that portion of the book of Genesis which records the history of Joseph.

No. 27.—Teloogoo 20 Pages.

The History of Petambera Sing.

The tract contains a very full account of a converted Hindoo.—His thoughts were first turned to the Gospel by his meeting with a portion of Scripture which he read. After making farther enquiries, he embraced Christianity and was baptized at Serampore.—He became a most decided and consistent Christian, preached the Gospel to his countrymen and died very happily. All these circumstances are detailed at length; the example of Petambera Sing is then recommended to the imitation of the reader and the whole is concluded by a prayer suited to his case.







